

# *Documents on Diplomacy: The Source*

## *Food for Starving Belgians*

*Ambassador Page (London) to the Secretary of State, November 3, 1914*

For the Secretary and Mr. House:  
The International Commission for Relief of Belgium, of which Herbert Hoover here is active chairman, has diplomatic arrangements complete by all governments concerned and has written guaranty of German military commander in Belgium that food for starving Belgians shall not be diverted. It works under joint chairmanship of Spanish Ambassador here, myself, American and Spanish Ministers to Belgium and to Holland, and it has the only available transportation of food from Rotterdam to Belgian places of distribution and the only available machinery for universal distribution in Belgium. It handles a relief given by various European Governments and private subscriptions and help taken up in neutral European countries. The problem is practically insoluble to feed something like four million starving people.

The generous work of the United States seems to have many over-lapping activities and organizations which to a degree defeat one another. It is desirable, if possible, that one central, wholly American committee be created through which all organizations may send food. I hear the President has been asked to appoint such a committee. If you think it wise advise such a course, concentrate all efforts. Hoover will send explicit directions how much food, what kinds of food, how to ship, in what quantities, and at what intervals so as to coordinate work done in United States with work done in Europe. Answer.

AMERICAN AMBASSADOR

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### *Source*

*United States Department of State, Papers Relating to Foreign Affairs, 1914, Supplement, The World War, pp. 814-815*